

A
SERMON
PREACH'D
ON THE
Occasion of the DEATH
OF OUR
Late Sovereign
King *WILLIAM* III.
Of Glorious Memory.

By the Author of the ESSAY for a
COMPREHENSION.

L O N D O N :
Printed, and are to be Sold by *John Nutt*, near *Stationers-Hall*, 1702.

SEERMON

OF

THE



BY

JOHN

WILSON

NEW YORK

Ib

Bu

T

of
Cy
wh
mar
(aph

A
SERMON
PREACH'D

On the Occasion of the Death of our
late Sovereign King *William III.*
of Glorious Memory.

PSAL. LXXXii. vi. vii.

*I have said, Ye are Gods: and all of you are Children
of the Most High.
But ye shall die like Men, and fall like one of the
Princes.*

THIS Psalm is thought, by some, to have been
Pen'd by *Asaph*, Chief of one of those Orders
of Men, who were Appointed by *David* King
of *Israel*, for the service of the Temple by Songs, with
Cymbals, Pfalteries and Harps; tho' there are others
who do think that not *Asaph*, but *David* was the Pen-
man of it, and that it was compos'd for the use of *A-*
saph, whose special Imployment it was, upon suitable

1 Chron.
25. 6.

Occasions, to sing to the praise of God, this, and other Psalms which bear his Name, in the Temple.

But whoever was the Penman, the Design of the Holy Spirit in this Psalm is seriously to exhort those, who are in Authority, impartially to administer Justice without respect of Persons; and that this Exhortation might prove more effectual, it is contained under the form of a severe reprehension of unjust and oppressive Rulers; and as this seems to be the Design of the Spirit of God in composing this Psalm, so that this Exhortation might be more forcible and perswasive, it is backed with several moving Considerations dispersed in the various parts of it: As 1. that we may take them as they ly in order, from the Consideration of the special Presence of God in the Judicial Assemblies of the Sons of Men, mention'd, v. 10. *God standeth in the Congregation of the mighty, he judgeth among the Gods*: God is in a special manner Present with those who are in Authority, he considers their Actions, and weighs all their Proceedings in a just and righteous Ballance; this is a consideration, if seriously weighed, sufficient to move the Rulers of the World to administer Justice impartially, since their Actions are open to the view of a Higher than they.

2. Another Consideration made use of by the Psalmist, to excite Magistrates to administer Justice impartially, is their high Honour and Dignity in regard of the respective Offices they bear, v. 6. *I have said, ye are Gods, and all of you are Children of the most High*; Magistrates are by God's own appointment his Vice-Gerents, whom he makes use of in the Government of the World beneath, and upon this account are worthy of Honour and Respect; and as they are upon this account worthy of Honour and Esteem, so the

Con.

Consideration of the Character they bear, should be a prevailing Argument with them, to administer Justice and Judgment impartially, that so they may resemble him in the Justice and Holiness of his nature, whom they represent by their Character.

3. The last thing mentioned by the Psalmist to move the Rulers of the Earth to administer Justice impartially, is the Consideration of their Mortality, v. 7. *But ye shall dye like Men, and fall like one of the Princes*; Rulers, notwithstanding their Dignity, and the Honour and Respect which is due upon this account to them, are mortal; they must dye, and return to Dust, like other Men; the highest are not exempt from being subject to God's irreversible decree against the Children of Men. *It is appointed for all Men once to dye, and after that the Judgment*: And this is a Law to which all, even the highest Rulers, do owe Obedience. The serious consideration of this should powerfully perswade and excite all, who are in Authority, to administer Justice, and Execute Judgment uprightly, that they may not fall in Judgment, when that they shall appear to give an Account of their Actions before the dreadful Tribunal of Jesus Christ: Having thus laid open my way to the Words, there are two Propositions, as agreeable to the present occasion, which I shall insist on: These I shall briefly open, and suitably apply.

Prop. 1. Rulers are God's Vice-Gerents: I have said, saith the Psalmist in the Text, Ye are Gods, and all of you are Children of the Most High: What ever different apprehensions Men may have concerning the different Forms of Government exercised in this World, yet this all seem to be agreed in, that Government in general is of divine Authority: As therefore order and

Rule.

Rule in general are acknowledg'd by all to be of God; so, however Men may disagree in Opinion about the Nature and Extent of that Power, with which Magistrates are Intrusted; yet all own, that all that Power, which they do of right Exercise is of God, and that therefore to resist or oppose them in the Exercise of their Lawful Authority, is to resist not Man but God; in this the Scriptures are very Express and Plain. *Rom. 13. 1, 2. There is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God; whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God:* Magistracy is of God, and Magistrates are his Officers, appointed by him to be a Terror to evil Doers, but a Joy to them that do well; they are, and I think the Titles given them in the *Psalms* will justify the Expression, *Vice-Gods, Gods dwelling with Men*: They are his Vice-Roys on Earth, the Instruments of his Providence whom he makes use of in ordering the Affairs and Government of this Earth beneath; by whom he doth Preserve the Peace and Order of the World; this is so Evident, that nothing further seems necessary to be said upon this Head; which therefore I shall endeavour, by some few Inferences, suitably to improve.

Infer. 1. Are Magistrates God's Vicegerents, from hence we may infer that Obedience is their due from all who are under their Authority: This is not merely an Inference drawn from the Proposition laid down, but is a Duty plainly and frequently recommended in the Gospel, *Let every Soul, saith the Apostle, be Subject to the higher Powers*; the Reason of which Injunction is the Dignity and Honour of their Function, as being deriv'd from a Divine Authority: This Doctrine of Subjection to Principalities and Powers,

Powers, and of Obedience to Magistrates; the same Apostle Exhorts *Titus* to Preach to those that were committed to his Care, *Tit. 3. 1.* Subjection and Obedience to Magistrates therefore is not barely a Duty to be practiced by private Persons, but it is also one special Part of the Work of those who are Employ'd in the Ministerial Office upon suitable Occasions, earnestly to press this Duty upon their Hearers; and that we may see that this is not the single Opinion of this Apostle only: The Apostle *Peter* also urges the same Duty upon those to whom he wrote his Epistle, *1. Pet. 2. 13. 14.* *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the King as Supream; or unto Governours as those who were sent by him for the Punishment of evil Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well.* This is a Duty, so necessary to be Discharg'd, that without the Exercise of it, it will be impossible to preserve the Peace and Order of Humane Societies: And as this Duty is Moral in its Nature, so is it perpetual as to its Obligation: And now I am speaking to this Matter, that we may continue steadfast in our Duty, and Affection to Her Present Majesty, who, by the Providence of God, is now become our Supream Ruler, let me bespeak you not easily to give heed to evil Reports: Men of factious and turbulent Spirits will industriously spread them, if they find Persons credulous enough to believe them; which, if we are ready to do, it will naturally Alienate our Affection from, and make us Cold and Indifferent in the discharge of that Duty to Her, in the Continuance whereof is our Security.

2. From what has been said we may Infer, that it is our Duty not only to Obey, but Pray for Magistrates

gistrates also, that God would direct, Council, Guide and Conduct them in all their ways, that under the Influences of their Government, we may Live righteous and sober Lives in all Godliness and Honesty; *I Exhort therefore, says the Apostle, that first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Giving of Thanks, be made for all Men, for Kings, and for all that are in Authority, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2.* This is not only a piece of Respect and Deference paid them upon the account of their Dignity, but a Duty necessary to be perform'd by Reason of the Importance of their Function: There are two things especially which ought to Excite us to be earnest in Prayer to God for those who are in Authority.

1. The acceptable Nature of this Duty to God our Saviour; this is the Argument used by the Apostle in the Chapter just cited, to back his Exhortation with Prayer for those who are in Authority: Is what God our Saviour has Commanded, in the Performance therefore of which he takes great Delight and Satisfaction.

2. The Consideration of what depends upon the good or evil Administration of Affairs, by those who are in Authority, should ingage every Man to Pray earnestly that a Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding may always rest upon our Rulers; the Peace and Happiness of every individual Subject do depend upon the Wisdom of our Rulers, whose Hearts are in the Hands of God: The Consideration whereof should provoke us to Besiege Heaven with our Cries for a Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding upon those, who have the Direction and Management of all publick Affairs: But I proceed to the next Proposition to be insisted on.

2. Prop.

Prop. 2. That Magistrates, notwithstanding their Honour and Dignity, as God's Vicegerents, and the Respect owing to them as such, are Mortal, and must Die like other Men: *But ye shall die like Men, and fall like one of the Princes.* Tho Rulers are now exalted for a time above their Brethren, and double Honour is due to them upon the account of the Character they bear, as being Officers appointed by God for the good of Mankind, yet in a little while they will be upon a Level with the meanest of their Subjects; they shall Die like other Men, and are liable to like Corruption with the meanest of those over whom they Rule: The place that now knows them, shall know them no more; their Grandeur shall Die with them and all their Glory shall be laid in the Dust. Death, at it is the last, so it will be a Victorious Enemy; for those who have subdued their Enemies on every side, whose repeated Victories have given them the Title of Invincible, have at last been Conquer'd by the King of Terrors: The mightiest Monarchs, against whom no Humane Force has been able to stand, have yeilded to the irresistible Assaults of Death, whose powerful Stroaks have in a Moment put a Period to their Triumphs. *Alexander* who Conquer'd the East; *Cæsar*, whose Motto was *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, are no more, but remain Captives to this Victorious Adversary; and as no Power can resist, so no Wealth can bribe this Enemy; not all the Riches of *Cræsus*, or the Wealth of the *Indies* can Ransom the Possessour of them from the Grave; and which is yet more to be lamented, Goodness it self can't procure any Exemption from this Universal Law of Nature; but all, the most Potent, the most Wealthy, the most Pious, from the King upon his Throne,

B

to

to the Beggar upon the Dunghil, are equally liable to Death; this Truth we have had abundantly confirm'd in the late sad Providence: Which therefore I shall now endeavour to apply suitably to our selves in a two-fold Capacity:

1. As we are Private Persons.
2. As we are Members of a Community, and Subjects of the State.

1. I shall Endeavour to make some suitable Application of what has been said as we are Private Persons: This I shall do by drawing some Inferences from the Proposition laid down:

Infer. 1. Must Magistrates Die, as well as others, and lye down in the Dust with the meanest of their Subjects, hence we may Infer how little Worldly Injoyments are to be esteem'd: The Wise Man tells us, *That all is Vanity and vexation of Spirit*, Eccles.

1. 2. The Vanity of every thing here below doth abundantly appear from the fading Nature of all Earthly Injoyments: The Fashion of this World passeth away, and no Injoyments, that Men are in this Life possess of, are of any long duration; such is the uncertain State of things in this Life, that we are not secure of the continuance of the least Injoyment for one Day: Riches take themselves Wings and flee away; such is the uncertainty, that he who abounds to Day, may be reduc'd to the meanest Circumstances to Morrow. Honour is not lasting, for he that is in Honour abideth not, so variable are the outward Circumstances of Persons, that he who sits now upon the highest Pinacle of Honour, may in a very short time be reduc'd to the lowest degree of Contempt. Might and Power are as uncertain as Riches and Honour; seeing that he who is one Day the Object
of

of his Adversaries Fear and Dread, because of his mighty strength, may the next become the Object of their Contempt and Scorn, as being destitute of all Help: But after all, tho' these outward Advantages should continue throughout the whole Course of a Man's Life, Death at last will deprive him of the Benefit and Advantage of all these Injoyments; his Riches, Honour and Might will not secure him from the Grave, or obtain a Moments Reprieve from the powerful Assaults of the King of Terrors; and when he lies down in the Dust, his Riches, Honour and Might will be no more, neither will they be of any stead but to increase his Accounts in the next World: Now are all the Injoyments of Life, as also Life it self so uncertain, of how little value and esteem are all things here? there can be no Satisfaction or Happiness reaped from these things which are of so perishing a Nature; what Folly therefore are we Guilty of in pursuing after the Honours and Riches of this Earth, which are uncertain in their duration, and perish in their using?

Infer. 2. Must Magistrates Die, and will not their Honour and Wealth secure them from the Grave? From hence we may Infer, how valuable the Treasures and Honour of the next Life are: Here the most advantageous Circumstances will not secure from Death, which will deprive us of the Benefit of them, and therefore are not worthy of our esteem; but the Injoyments of the next Life are truly valuable, because they are of a lasting Nature; the Joys of that State will be as lasting as full, and the Spring that feeds those Rivers of Pleasures which flow at God's right Hand will never dry; they are durable in their Nature, and will be enjoyed by the Possessors there-

of to eternal Ages, because they will then be Immortal, they shall never be depriv'd of those Heavenly Treasures by the Stroke of Death; neither will their Honour be any more laid in the Dust: The Injoyments of the next Life therefore are the things which are alone valuable in their Nature and deserve our esteem; upon which therefore, and not upon any thing here below, our Thoughts and Desires ought to be constantly fixed; for why should the Honours and Riches of this Life, which are fading in their Nature, and of which we must shortly be depriv'd, be the only Objects of our Hopes and Desires, when that Treasures of a more excellent Nature are reserved in Heaven, for those who Obey the Precepts of the Gospel?

Infer. 3. Are Rulers Mortal, and do they Die like other Men; have we seen this verified in the late, never enough to be lamented, dispensation of God's Providence to this Kingdom: From hence we may Infer, how much it becomes us with Submission to comply with the Design of this Providence, by a serious Preparation for Death: Is the removal of a Master of a Family a Providential Call to all that are in that Family to provide for a Dying Hour; and is not the removal of the Supream Ruler of a Nation under God, a much louder Call to all the Inhabitants of the Land to remember their latter End? if the Wealth and Honour of those who are in Authority cannot secure unto them a moments ease from Pain, or an Exemption from the Universal Law of Nature, much less can we who are their Subjects hope to escape the Victorious Assaults of the last Enemy: Have we therefore in the late sad Providence such an Instance of the Mortality of the Best and
Greatest

Greatest Rulers, let us be minded thereby of our Mortallity and powerfully excited to Provide seriously for our latter End: And that we may be thus provided, let us *lay aside every weight and the Sin that doth so easily beset us*; let us live Ornaments to the Profession of Christianity, and in the constant Discharge of the Duties of our Holy Religion, by heartily complying with the Precepts of the Gospel, that when our Lord shall come he may find us so doing, I proceed to make some suitable Improvement of what has been said to our selves as we are Members of the Community, and Subjects of the State; and this I shall endeavour to do in the following Uses:

1. Are Princes mortal, and must they dye like other Men; have we seen this verified in the late sad Providence, then let us not put our confidence in an Arm of Flesh: *Put not your Trust in Princes, saith the Psalmist; nor in the Son of Man, in whom there is no help. His Breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth: Psal. 146. in that very day his thoughts perish.* Kings are not to be relied on for deliverance and Protection; they are mortal like other Men, and when their Breath goeth forth, their Designs and Projects, whether for the Good or Evil of Mankind, perish together with them; those therefore who put their confidence in These, and look up no higher unto Him by whom Kings Reign, and Princes decree Justice, shall be ashamed of their confidence, when deprived by divine Providence of those who are the objects of their Trust and Dependance: Let not us therefore put our Trust in Princes, or our Confidence in the Kings of the Earth, but let our Confidence be in God, and our Trust in him, who is the Saviour of Israel: *It is better to Trust in the Lord, than to put Confidence in Princes. Ps. 118. v. 9. He is Almighty,*

Almighty, and therefore able to protect and defend his People from all the attempts of their Enemies: He is immortal; and therefore will continue for ever the Saviour of *Israel*; He Reigns over all the Earth, the Affairs of which are under his Rule and Government: Let us therefore rejoyce in him, in him only let us put our Confidence, let our intire Dependance be upon him; He will under all the Revolutions and Alterations which happen here, be careful to protect and defend his Servants; those that place their Confidence in God, shall never be ashamed.

2. Are Rulers mortal, and must they dye like other Men, have we seen this verified in the unspeakable Loss not only of his late Majesty King *William*, of Glorious Memory; but the other Branches of the Royal Family, who have been within the compass of a few Years removed by Death from us; then let us seriously consider, what may be the Reasons of Gods so severe Dispensations of Providence towards us: For when Gods Hand is upon us, especially by a removal of our Rulers, it becomes us to reflect upon our past Actions, and to inquire why God doth shake the Foundations upon which we stand, by the removal of the Pillars of the Government; and if this becomes us upon every such occasion, it certainly more becomes us, when the frequent Breaches made in the Royal Family are such as have not been usual; which will appear if we look back upon the Years past: Which, that I may be helpful to you, in this part of the Application of what has been said, be pleas'd to consider, *viz.*

Not many Years ago, our Circumstances were such, that we had a certain prospect of Misery, without any hopes of deliverance; our Liberties were invaded

yaded, and Religion in danger of being lost ; our Enemies were Mighty, and we without Strength to oppose their Designs ; so that we thought that the measure of our Iniquities was full, and the appointed time come for God to pour out his Vengeance upon a sinful People ; we despair'd of Deliverance, and did not expect any Saviour : This was our deplorable Condition, when it pleas'd God to raise up his late Majesty to be under him our Saviour and Defender ; to his Attempts, God beyond our Hopes or Expectation gave great Success, and by him wrought out a wonderful Salvation . God placed him upon the Throne, and after a sad prospect of Slavery and Sorrow, gave as great a prospect of Felicity to us and our Posterity.

We saw a King upon the Throne, who had wrought out a mighty Salvation for us ; and who, if we might Judge by his Indowments, seem'd to be the Person design'd by Providence to accomplish the Salvation he had begun, by settling us upon the lasting Foundations of Peace and Righteousness ; He seem'd to be every way qualified for this great Work, and we hoped, that this was the Person, who by his victorious Arms would have re-established the Protestant Religion, not only here, but in Foreign Parts : He was a King of whom it might be truly said, he was the *delight of our Eyes, and under God the Breath of our Nostrils* ; his Reign was a continued Course of Justice and Mercy, Witdom and Valour : He was in reality, what he in his last Speech Declares, he had always endeavoured to Manifest himself to be, *the Common Father of his People* : He was Just in his Administration of the Government, without being guilty of Oppression, of which he had constant Observance ; and therefore made

made it his Care not only to preserve the Prerogatives of the Crown, but to maintain the Liberties of his People also: His Mercy was as eminent as his Justice, which caused him to treat those sometimes with an unexpected Lenity, whose Carriage and Behaviour towards him, might have provoked him to have used them with the utmost Severity: The mildness of his Disposition and Temper was abundantly manifested in that Paragraph of his last Speech, wherein he Declares himself ready to *Forgive the highest Offences committed against himself*: An Expression which ought not to be remembred now he is gone without concern for so great a Loss. To these Indowments I must add that of his Wisdom and Prudence in the Management of the great Affairs of State, which visibly appear'd in all the Actions of his Reign, tho' in none more then uniting the different Factions of the Kingdom in such a manner, that, however opposite they were to each other, every Party caressed him, and join'd in the Common Defence of their Country. I cannot conclude my Account of his Government without mentioning his Compassion to the Poor, manifested in the frequent mention he made of their Circumstances to his People from the Throne: As also his Care for the Defence and Propagation of our Holy Religion in all Parts of his Dominions, manifested by the Illustrious Example of Morality he set us in his own Life, in his frequent recommending to his Parliament the providing effectual Laws for the suppressing Vice and Profaneness; and lastly, his Care for the promoting the Profession of our Holy Religion in the utmost Parts of his Dominions, did appear in his granting a Patent to several Worthy Persons of this Nation, to take Care of the Propagation of our Holy Religion

in the Forreign Plantations : These things rendred his Reign at Home very Glorious ; and as he Reign'd in the Hearts of his Subjects at Home, so his Name was no less Illustrious Abroad ; when he was in the Field, his Valour and Conduct made him formidable to his Adversary, who dreaded nothing so much as the Power of his Arms : He was as well Experienc'd in the Art of War, as the Maxims of Government, and knew how to lead forth our Armies, among whom he exposed his Life to a Thousand Dangers, that nothing might be wanting on his Part to establish the Common Security : And if we Consider him in Relation to the rest of the Princes of *Europe*, he seem'd to be the only Person design'd by Providence to rescue the Liberties of *Europe* from the ambitious Designs of *France* ; having by an indefatigable Industry so cemented the several Princes of *Europe* together by the strictest Alliances, that they all acted in Concert to preserve the Common Liberties of *Europe*, while the late King seem'd always to be the Life and Band of the Confederacy. This was our Felicity, which we cannot look back upon without Regret for the loss we now sustain.

The Felicity of our then Circumstances, was increased by beholding upon the Throne, a Queen ; whose Virtues adorn'd the Crown she wore : Who was as Good as Great admir'd Abroad, and belov'd at Home ; under the happy Influences of whose Government we liv'd in Peace, every Man injoying the Fruit of his own Labour, and sitting securely under his own Vine ; while the Countrys round about us were liable to the rapin of merciless Soldiers ; and the King our Defender was leading forth our Armies, and exposing his valuable Life to a Thousand Hazards for our Security : And that which added to our Happiness

at that time, was the Prospect we had, from the Years of this incomparable Pair, of a Royal Progeny worthy of such a Parentage.

We were then blest with a Collateral Branch of the Royal Family, I mean *Her present Majesty*; whose Zeal for our Holy Religion, manifested in the Dangers she underwent upon the Account thereof in Concert with His late Majesty of Glorious Memory, gave us an Assurance of the continuance of our Holy Religion under her Protection; when it should please God to place her upon the Throne of her Ancestors: And that which compleated the Happiness of our then Circumstances, was her being the Mother of, tho' not a numerous, yet a hopeful Issue; whose Protestant Education gave us a pleasing Prospect of our holy Religions being transmitted down to our Posterity. These were the Advantages we then enjoy'd, but did not value as we ought; under these happy Circumstances we look'd upon our selves secure, and thought that our Mountain stood so strong, that neither the Designs of Men, nor the Malice of Hell was able to move it; the Branches of the Royal Family at Home were so many, that we had no thought at that time of a *Foreign Succession*; but what Men nor Devils were not able to Effect, God has, provoak'd by our Sins, threatned to accomplish; and by reducing the Royal Family within a very narrow Compass, has, tho' not wholly remov'd, yet in a very dreadful manner shaken our Mountain, and given us reason to fear the further Marks of his Displeasure without a Sincere Repentance for our Iniquities.

We first saw our selves depriv'd of her late Majesty, in the very midst of her Days and Strength, by a sudden and fatal Distemper; by which Stroke we became at once destitute of the happy Influences of her Reign,
and

and depriv'd of the Hopes of a Royal Progeny of Protestant Princes to descend from her Loins.

Not many Years after God removed the Duke of *Glocester*, the only surviving Issue of her present Majesty, by whose Death we were defeated in our Expectations from him; a Loss which we did not then seem so sensible of, as we ought to have been, and which now we have more reason to be concern'd at.

These Losses have been attended now, with a far greater the removal, by Death, of his late Majesty *K. William*; at a time when the Season of the Year, the ripeness of Measures concerted for our Security, and the eminent danger we are in, made the continuance of his Life very desirable to us. These are Strokes which followed very close one upon the heels of another, and have been like *Job's* Messengers of evil Tidings. These are indeed the Stroaks of Providence, for which reason we ought not to repine, but patiently submit to his afflicting hand; but yet (the *wise Man* informing us, that a *day of Adversity* is a fit opportunity for *Consideration*;) tho' I would not insinuate, as tho' these more than ordinary Stroaks of God's Providence, were any certain Evidences of God's Indignation against us, for any Particular Sin we may be guilty of more than the Nations round about us; yet I cannot but think that under such Marks of the Divine Displeasure, it becomes us, with Humility, to consider what we may have done to provoke God to deal thus severely by us; seeing that the design of the Rod is the Sinner's Instruction; and the Scripture tells us, that *for the Transgressions of a People, many are the Princes thereof*: And upon this occasion I would recommend some few Things to your consideration, 1. May not these severe dispensations of Providence be occasioned by the Increase of *Atheism* and *Infidelity* amongst us? Never had we greater

advantages for Promoting our Holy Religion, than in the last Reign; yet never was there a greater increase of Atheism, and falling off from the Faith Professed in common by Christians, than there has of late been: Formerly if some Men, and at most they were very few who did so, did deviate from any fundamental Article of Christianity, they were ashamed to own publicly their Apostacy; whereas many have of late openly denied the Lord that bought them, and become the avowed Advocates of Infidelity: This is a high degree of Iniquity, with which God cannot but be greatly displeased; and may we not justly fear, that this is amongst the Sins, which have provoked God, to remove from us those Rulers who were the great Support, under God, of that Holy Religion which has been despised at such a Rate, by Some amongst us.

2. May not the abounding *Impiety* and *Profaness* of the Age we live in be among the Reasons, why God deals thus severely, in removing from us our Rulers? Iniquity has, notwithstanding the many attempts to put some stop to the Growth thereof, increased at a Prodigious rate amongst us: There is no Amendment, no Reformation, notwithstanding all the Vows we made in the day of our distress; and may not this be one reason, why God deals thus with us?

3. May not those *Divisions* and *Animosities* which Reign amongst us, be amongst the reasons, why God deals thus with us? There is nothing more contrary to the Example of our Redeemer, or the Precepts of the Gospel, than Divisions and Strifes amongst Christians: Time was, when in our distress, we promised very fair in this respect, notwithstanding which we have still continued our Strifes and Debates, about matters of the least weight and moment: I have sometimes wondered how it is possible that Men should be so strangely divided about Things of so little Concernment: Did we consider, as we ought to do, how provoking these things are to God, how disadvantageous to our Holy Religion, how contrary to the Example of our Redeemer, and the Holy and Righteous Precepts of the Gospel, we should Study the Peace of *Zion* more than we do. I have sometimes, upon this occasion, thought of those Holy and Excellent
Martyrs

Martyrs *Ridley* and *Hooper*, who, when under Persecution for the sake of the same Gospel, became perfectly agreed about those Little Things, about which in the time of their Prosperity, they had so earnestly contended; as also to lament their former Discords: What will not, my Brethren, be done by the engaging Methods of Goodness and Forbearance, God can effect and accomplish by the severer Methods of Providence: And I heartily wish we may not go on by our Divisions and Animosities, to provoke God to take the same Methods to unite and heal our Breaches, as he did with those *Holy Men* and *Martyrs*, of whom I have now been speaking: Oh that it were by some more seriously considered, what degrees of compassion, what measures of forbearance, are due to the Infirmities of their Brethren! and that it were more seriously considered by others, what obligations they are under, to comport themselves as much as possible with, and to submit themselves to the order established amongst us: That we may heartily unite and concur together, to promote Holiness, and carry on the great Design of the Incarnation of the Son of God; that tho' God has shaken, he may not be provoked to subvert and overturn the Foundations of a *Protestant* Government amongst us.

4. Have we not provoked God to contend with us in the manner he hath done, by putting too much Confidence in *Arm of Flesh*? There is nothing more provoking to God, than a Sin of this nature; he will not give his Glory to another, but expects, whatever Instruments he makes use of, to have his People make him the Object of their Hopes and Dependance: Nothing can excite God to remove our Rulers from us more, than a placing that Trust and Confidence in Them, which ought to be put in God only: And I wish we have no occasion, in respect of the great and unexpressible Loss we sustain, to apply to our selves, what it is reported, that the Great *Gustavus Adolphus* should say of himself; that the People would shorten his Days, by putting more Confidence in Him, than in their Maker: If these, or any of them, are the Sins which we are Guilty of, or which are the reigning Sins of the Land in which we live, let us repent of, and mourn for them, that we may not by our obstinacy

stinacy, provoke God to go on to smite us, and our Rulers, until he has made a *Full End* of us.

3. Another use I would make of what has been said, as also the sad Occasion of it, is to exhort you to be thankful, that under the present Dispensations of Providence, our Circumstances are no worse, but that it is so well with us as it is: Our Loss in the Death of his late Majesty King *William* is inexpressible; but yet it might have been much Greater, if it had not been, that many favourable Circumstances do considerably diminish it, and without which it would have been indeed unsupportable: Tho' this be a very severe Dispensation of Providence, yet we have still reason to acknowledge, that in the *midst of Judgment* God has remembered Mercy: The further Succession of the Crown in the *Protestant Line* might have been unsettled, which would have made the Loss more heavy to those who consider, with in how narrow a compass the Royal Family at Home is contracted; and what an encouragement therefore, the prospect of our confused condition after the Death of her present Majesty, [whom God long preserve,] would have been to our Enemies, to have attempted her precious Life: But blessed be God, that the further Settlement of the Crown in the *Protestant Line*, hath in a great measure prevented their Hopes, and our Fears upon this Account.

The King, our Defender, might have been taken away before the late King *James*; which Accident, if it had happened, none but Almighty God knows what might have been the Consequences of it: God might have taken away Her present Majesty before the Removal of his late Majesty King *William*, and the Succession to the Crown might have immediately come to those Foreign Princes to whom by the Act for the further Limitation of the Crown as in such Case, it belongs; and what a vast disadvantage to us, such a fatal Accident would have been at this Critical Juncture, when the Circumstances of Affairs do require that we should be firmly United among our selves, will appear to him, who considers the Disunion of the two Kingdoms of *England* and *Scotland*; as also what room there would have been for Commotions at Home, by reason of Their

small

f
Rulers,said, as
thank-

vidence,

ell with

y King

n much

Circum-

which it

e a very

reason

od has

Crown

which

o confi-

t Home

re, the

of her

d have

us Life:

of the

re pre-

.

away

appen-

e been

away

Majesty

t have

om by

n such

s, such

cture,

at we

ear to

gdoms

would

Their

small

small Interest amongst us: If those things had happened, they would have aggravated our Loss to a degree that would have been unsupportable.

We are depriv'd indeed of the Protection of a King, who was under God the Defender of our *Religion* and *Liberties*, who truly deserved the Character given him by the *Noblest Hand*, of being *the great Support, not only of these Kingdoms, but of all Europe*: But yet we are not as Sheep without a Shepherd; the Throne is happily filled with a Queen, whose Zeal for the *Protestant Religion*, and *Liberties of Europe* in general, and *England* in particular, gives us the pleasing Prospect of the Continuance of both the One and the Other, during the Courte of her Reign, which God grant may be Long and Prosperous.

The Throne is not only filled to our great Satisfaction at present, but the Succession of the Crown in the *Protestant* Line is happily provided for; as also secured by the commendable zealous Care and Industry of his late Majesty, by the most effectual Methods, which Human Prudence could suggest: Which fills us with an Assurance, that our Holy Religion, as also our Civil Rights will not only be continued to us under the Influences of her Majesty's auspicious Reign, but happily transmitted also to our Posterity after us. These are Circumstances so favourable, that tho' they cannot altogether extinguish our Sorrow and Concern for the Loss we sustain, yet do very much alleviate our Grief, and revive our drooping Spirits; for which therefore we ought to be truly thankful to Almighty God, who notwithstanding we have provoked him by our numerous Transgressions, has not left us to stray as Sheep without a Shepherd.

4. Upon this Occasion let us be excited to admire and adore the Wisdom and Goodness of the Divine Providence to us, in so happily making the most severe Events of Providences, as well as the blackest Designs of our implacable Enemies, the means of our present Security: The Wisdom of God is unfearchable, and his Ways are past our finding out; the Designs of his Providence are not discoverable very often, but by the Events of things: We now have

have an Opportunity of seeing the Wisdom of God eminently manifested, in causing the Snares laid by our Enemies to intangle our Feet, to be the great means under God of our Safety and Happiness: How wonderfully has God in his Wisdom converted the very blackest Designs of our Enemies into the Matter of our Security! If they had never attempted the Assassination of his late Majesty, designing thereby to have effected our Ruin, we, in all probability, had never enjoy'd the Benefit of that Law, whereby the *Legislative* Power is, notwithstanding the Death of the King, and contrary to the usual Custom, continued: As the being of this Law was owing to the Designs of the Enemies of our Peace against the valuable Life of our then Sovereign King *William*; so the Benefit of it at this time, will abundantly appear to those who consider, what a vast Delay in the publick Affairs would have been the Consequence of the Dissolution of the *Legislative* part of our Constitution, which would have been the sad Effect of the King's Death, had not that particular Law provided against it.

The Death of the Duke of Gloucester was the Occasion of the *Act of Succession*; and the Insolent Attempt of the French King, in espousing the pretended Title of an Impostor, in Opposition to the Settlement of the Crown here at Home, rais'd us out of a Security which in this Juncture might, upon such a Change, have been Fatal; and has animated us to take Care to secure our own Settlement in such a manner, that we may yet hope, that neither the Powers of Hell, nor the Malice of Men, will be able to prevail against us. I shall Conclude all with this Exhortation, that You would earnestly Pray to God for Her present Majesty Queen *Anne*; that God would lengthen her Days, and Prosper her Government; and that tho' our Hopes and Expectations, of having our Salvation fully accomplish'd by the late King of Glorious Memory, be defeated, that he would make the Queen Instrumental in Effecting with Success, what he so gloriously Design'd; that we may yet, beyond our Expectations, be, as in the Days of *Deborah*, saved from all our Enemies by the Hand of a Woman. Amen.

FINIS.